



**MINUTES
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
City Hall – Bel Aire, Kansas
March 17, 2020 7:00 P.M.**



I. CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Jim Benage

II. ROLL CALL

Present were Jeff Elshoff, Dr. Joel Schroeder, Diane Wynn, and Justin Smith.

Also present were City Manager Ty Lasher, City Attorney Jacqueline Kelly, and City Clerk Melissa Krehbiel.

III. OPENING PRAYER: Dr. Rob Lindsted provided the opening prayer.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

V. DETERMINE AGENDA ADDITIONS:

Item C – Consideration of COVID-19 actions by the City Manager.

MOTION: Council Member Smith moved to approve the Addition of Item C on the agenda. Council Member Wynn seconded the motion. *Motion carried 4-0.*

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Minutes of the March 3, 2020 City Council Meeting.

B. Fireworks Permit for Bellino Fireworks to be located at 45th & Woodlawn.

MOTION: Council Member Elshoff moved to approve the consent agenda as listed and authorize the Mayor to sign. Council Member Schroeder seconded the motion. *Motion carried 4-0.*

VII. DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF APPROPRIATIONS ORDINANCE

A. Consideration of Appropriations Ordinance 20-05 in the amount of \$405,919.72.

MOTION: Council Member Schroeder moved to approve Appropriations Ordinance 20-05. Council Member Smith seconded the motion. *Motion carried 4-0.*

VIII. OATH OF OFFICE

City Council Member John Welch took the oath and was seated with the council. Council Member Welch was appointed at the City Council meeting on March 4, 2020, to fill the vacant council seat left by Jim Benage. His term will expire in November 2021.

IX. CITY REQUESTED APPEARANCES: None

X. CITIZEN CONCERNS: No one requested to speak.

XI. REPORTS

A. Council Member Reports

Council Member Welch reported that he attended the meeting with USD 259 and things seem to be going well.

B. Mayor's Report

A meeting was held on March 9th concerning the traffic issue on St. James Street near Isely Elementary School. A landscaping proposal was discussed at that meeting and Mayor Benage expects a memorandum of understanding will soon be signed.

Six citizens and Council Member Smith attended the first Coffee with the Mayor on March 14th. A variety of issues were discussed, and the next Coffee with the Mayor is tentatively planned for May.

On March 11, Mayor Benage communicated with the City Manager and Chief of Police regarding local response to the coronavirus pandemic. This is a rapidly changing situation. City Manager Lasher will give an update later in the meeting and facilitate discussion.

Chisholm Creek Utility Authority (CCUA) received a warning related to the pandemic, that there may be an increase in flushable wipes in the sewer lines. Mayor Benage reminded residents that for our sewer system there is no such thing as a "flushable" wipe; they don't exist. These wipes create a high risk of clogging the system and creating problems for the CCUA. It could also cause plumbing backups in homes and neighborhoods. Only toilet paper should be flushed, not other types of paper.

Mayor Benage asked residents to carefully consider their purchases of essential goods, such as toilet paper. Right now, the recommendation is for individuals and families to keep a two-week supply of food and essential goods at home. Please be kind with each other. Do not buy and stock more than you need. You may actually deprive someone of a good that they truly need.

Finally, Mayor Benage shared examples from history of God redeeming his people from disasters. He urged residents to pray for the end of the coronavirus crisis, to turn to scripture for guidance and reassurance and to support one another.

- C. City Attorney Report-** City Attorney Kelly reported that she is researching topics related to the new environment created by the coronavirus crisis. She is working to support the City Manager in HR and other administrative functions.
- D. City Manager Report-** City Manager Lasher deferred his comments to Item XII C on the agenda.

XII. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND FINAL ACTIONS

A. Consideration of confirming the Mayors Appointment of John Welch to the Bel Aire Land Bank.

MOTION: Council Member Smith moved to confirm Mayor Benage's appointment of John Welch to the Bel Aire Land Bank. Council Member Schroeder seconded the motion. *Motion carried 5-0.*

B. Consideration of accepting a quote from PP&J for street repairs on the following roads: Hanover, Falcon Lane, Perryton, Flagstaff, Janesville, Hedgerow and Edgemore Court at a cost of \$34,995.00.

MOTION: Council Member Wynn moved to the Quote from PP&J for repairs on certain roads in Bel Aire at a cost of \$34,995.00 and authorize the Mayor to sign. Council Member Schroeder seconded the motion. *Motion carried 5-0.*

C. Consideration of the City Manager recommendations related to the COVID-19 pandemic and City of Bel Operations (Outlined in the City Managers Memo Dated March 17, 2020).

City Manager Lasher reviewed the memo. In the last two days, Governor Kelly issued a declaration of local emergency for the state and Sedgwick County has prohibited gatherings of more than 50 attendees. Many businesses have closed. Local governments, including the cities of Maize, Goddard and Andover, have closed facilities to the public and are operating via telephone and internet. Today, Governor Kelly announced the closure of all K-12 schools through the end of the school year.

Bel Aire city staff have drafted an operations plan to address city services and staffing during the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan outlines three levels of staffing and services adjustments to respond to changing conditions. City Manager Lasher requests Council's approval to move to Level 2. City operations are currently at Level 1. Level 1 is normal operations while minimizing in-person meetings with the public. All senior activities are suspended. Public Works has contracted peer groups to keep operations going in case of a city staff shortage due to illness. The police department has suspended ride-alongs and finger-printing services. The utility department has suspended late payment fees and shut-offs for non-payment. New utility account start-ups are now accepted online. Finance is tracking expenses related to the pandemic in order to apply for federal relief funds, should those funds become available. Additional cleaning protocols have been instituted in city facilities.

City Manager Lasher requests Council's approval to move to Level 2, which would close City Hall and the Rec Center to the public. This is in-line with what other municipalities are doing. Staff will continue reporting and providing services. Payments will be accepted by dropbox and online, and convenience fees will be waived. Building permits and inspections will be by appointment. Municipal court tickets that do not require an appearance will be payable online and by dropbox. If an appearance is required, court dates may be postponed. Other city services will continue to be available online, such as building permits, and utility disconnects. The Rec Center will continue spring break child care through the end of the program this Friday.

Level 3 could be triggered if staff members are exposed to the virus or if other factors, such as school closures, make it unusually difficult or dangerous for staff to report to work in-person. In Level 3, many staff would be encouraged to work from home using telecommunication. Essential employees would work from city facilities. There are many functions, such as processing payments, which require staff to come into city facilities. Non-essential personnel may be temporarily reassigned to other duties, such as facility updates and maintenance.

Council Members asked questions about city council meetings, essential services, triggers for implementing changes to operations, and timelines for reinstituting penalties for late payments and non-payment of utility bills.

City Manager Lasher said the timeline for reinstituting penalties is hard to predict. After the pandemic is over, staff will increase communications to customers about late payment fees and may offer payment plans based on individual financial circumstances. All essential services included in Level 2 will also be provided in Level 3 operations. School closures may increase the need for flexible work schedules and telecommuting for some employees. The Kansas Attorney General has issued guidance on how to follow the Kansas Open Meetings Act during the pandemic and staff will work out technical details before the next City Council meeting.

Council members expressed the importance of slowing the spread of the disease and the desire to protect city staff and citizens through social distancing.

MOTION: Council Member Smith moved to approve the immediate implementation of Level 2 COVID-19 Operations Plan and authorize the City Manager to Level 3 COVID-19 Operations Plan as existing conditions required. Council Member Welch seconded the motion. ***Motion carried 5-0.***

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION - No executive session was held.

XIV. DISCUSSION AND FUTURE ISSUES – No other issues were discussed.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Council Member Wynn moved to adjourn. Council Member Smith seconded the motion. ***Motion carried 5-0.***

Approved by the City Council this 7th day of April, 2020.


Jim Benage, Mayor

ATTEST:


Melissa Krehbiel, City Clerk

